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STAAS & HALSEY LLP
SUITE 700
1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

EXAMINER

AIRAPETIAN, MILA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3625

DATE MAILED: 08/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/649,993	Applicant(s) TAKAOKA ET AL.	
	Examiner Mila Airapetian	Art Unit 3625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 May 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>05/26/2006</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

Applicant's amendment received on 05/26/2006 is acknowledged and entered. The applicant has amended claims 1-29. Currently, claims 1-29 are pending for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3, 8, 9, 11-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellenson et al. (hereinafter Ellenson) (US 2005/0108112) in view of Official Notice.

Claim 1.

Ellenson teaches a system for facilitating the real-time pricing, sale and appraisal of vehicles comprising:

a reception unit to receive specification information of a vehicle and an estimation request from said client terminal [0027];

a reading unit to read an estimated price of the vehicle from said estimated price database based upon the specification information of the vehicle [0028];

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a transmission unit to send the estimated price read by said reading unit to said client terminal without requesting a dealer estimated price [0027], [0071], [0094];

a transmission unit to send the specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal in order to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal [0071], [0094]; and

a control unit to decide whether to send the estimated price to said client terminal via the first transmission unit or to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal via the second transmission unit, and to control accordingly said first transmission unit or said second transmission unit [0071], [0094].

Ellenson does not specifically teach that said unit (server) includes first and second units for performing said functionalities.

Official Notice is taken that it is old and well known that software/hardware modules are frequently upgraded due to development in technology. For example, see Provencher et al. (US 6,639,910; col. 12, lines 3-5).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Ellenson to include that said functionalities are performed by first and second software/hardware units, because it would advantageously allow to upgrade each units separately.

Claim 2. Ellenson teaches said system further comprising a confirmation unit to communicate with said dealer terminal to confirm whether or not the estimated price to

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be sent to a client terminal, wherein, according to a result of confirmation by said confirmation unit, the estimated price is sent to said client terminal by said first transmission unit [0089].

Claim 3. Ellenson teaches said system wherein, if the estimation request is received within a predetermined period from an update of the estimated price in said estimated price database, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the estimated price to be automatically to said client terminal [0040].

Claim 8. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said estimated price database stores estimated prices that corresponds to each salesclerk of said dealer, said reception unit further receives salesclerk information specifying the salesclerk from said client terminal, and said reading unit reads the estimated price from said estimated price database based upon the salesclerk information and the specification information [0083].

Claim 9. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said estimated price database stores estimated prices for all different specification information of the vehicle, and said reading unit reads the estimated price corresponding to specification information from said estimated price database substantially matching the specification information received by said reception unit [0081].

Claim 11. Ellenson teaches said system, wherein said control unit corrects the estimated price and sends the corrected estimated price to said client terminal by said

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first transmission unit as an estimated price in response to the specification information received by said reception unit [0049].

Claim 12. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said sales support server is managed by a manufacturer of the vehicle, and an estimated price stored in said estimated price database cannot be updated freely by the manufacturer but can be updated only by access from said dealer terminal [0049].

Claim 13. Ellenson teaches said system, wherein said reception unit further receives client information specifying a client from said client terminal, said control unit decides whether to send the estimated price to said client terminal or to request the estimated price from said dealer terminal according to the client information received by said reception unit, and if said control unit decides to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal, said second transmission unit sends the client information and the specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal [0071].

Claim 14. Ellenson teaches said system, wherein said sales support server communicates with an automatic reply prohibited client database which stores client information of clients to whom an estimated price should not be automatically sent, and said control unit inquires whether the client information received by said reception unit is included in said automatic reply prohibited client database and, if the client information received by said reception unit is included in said automatic reply prohibited client

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database, said control unit decides to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal [0071].

Claim 15. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said sales support server communicates with a number of times of estimation database in which a number of estimation requests is stored for each client, and when the client has sent estimation requests more than a predetermined number of times according to the number of times estimation requests stored in said number of times of estimation database, said control unit decides to request the dealer an estimated price from said dealer terminal [0081].

Claim 16. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said reception unit is capable of further receiving a comment made by the client, and when said reception unit receives the comment, said control unit decides to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal [0071].

Claim 17. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said estimated price database stores specification information of a vehicle for a plurality of vehicles, an estimated price corresponding to each vehicle from the plurality of vehicles, and first calculator identification information of a person who has calculated the estimated corresponding to each vehicle from the plurality of vehicles, said reception unit further receives second calculator identification information of a person to calculate a second estimated price from said client terminal, said control unit decides whether or not said first calculator identification information corresponding to the estimated price of the specification information received by said reception unit and said second calculator identification

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information received by said reception unit are different, and if said control unit decides that the first calculator identification information and the second calculator identification information are different, said second transmission unit sends the estimated price to said dealer terminal and requests approval on transmitting the estimated price to said client terminal [0071].

Claim 18. Ellenson teaches a system for facilitating the real-time pricing, sale and appraisal of vehicles comprising:

reception means for receiving specification information of a vehicle and an estimation request from said client terminal [0027];

reading means for reading an estimated price from said estimated price database based upon the specification information [0028];

first transmission means for sending the estimated price read by said reading means to said client terminal without requesting a dealer estimated price [0027], [0071], [0094];

second transmission for sending the specification information received by said reception means to said dealer terminal in order to request the dealer an estimated price from said dealer terminal [0071], [0094]; and

control means for deciding whether to send the estimated price stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to inquire the estimated price, or to

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request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal, and controlling accordingly said first transmission means or said second transmission means [0071], [0094].

Claim 19. Ellenson teaches said system, wherein said reception means further receives client information specifying the client from said client terminal, said control means decides whether to send the estimated or to request the dealer estimated price according to the client information received by said reception means, and when said control means decides to request the dealer estimated price, said second transmission means sends the client information and the specification information received by said reception means to said dealer terminal [0040], [0071].

Claim 20. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said reception means is capable of further receiving a comment made by the client, and if said reception means receives the comment, said control means decides to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal [0071].

Claim 21. Ellenson teaches said system, wherein said estimated price database stores specification information of a vehicle for a plurality of vehicles, corresponding estimated prices,

and first calculator identification information of a person who has calculated each estimated price [0027],

said reception means further receives second calculator identification information of a person to calculate a second estimated price from said client terminal [0027],

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said control means decides whether or not said first calculator identification information and said second calculator identification information are different [0071], and

if said control means decides that the first calculator identification information and the second calculator identification information are different, said second transmission means sends the estimated price to said dealer terminal and requests approval on transmitting the estimated price to said client terminal [0071].

Claim 22. Ellenson teaches a system for facilitating the real-time pricing, sale and appraisal of vehicles including:

a sales support server managed by a manufacturer of vehicles; a dealer terminal used by a dealer of vehicles; a client terminal used by a client; and an estimated price database, which stores specification information for vehicles and corresponding estimated prices, wherein the sales support server, the dealer terminal, the client terminal, and the estimated price database are capable of communicating with each other via a network [0028], and

said sales support server comprises:

a reception unit to receive specification information of a vehicle and an estimation request from said client terminal [0027];

a reading unit which to read an estimated price from said estimated price database based upon the specification information of the vehicle [0028];

a first transmission unit to send the estimated price read by said reading unit to said client terminal without requesting a dealer estimated price [0027], [0071], [0094];

a second transmission unit to send the specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal in order to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal [0071], [0094]; and

a control unit to decide whether to send the estimated price stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer, and to control accordingly said first transmission unit or said second transmission unit [0071], [0094].

Claim 23. Ellenson teaches said system wherein said reception unit further receives client information specifying a client from said client terminal, said control unit decides whether to send the estimated price to said client terminal or to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer according to the client information received by said reception unit, and if said control unit decides to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal, said second transmission unit sends the client information and the specification information received by said reception unit to said dealer terminal [0040], [0071].

Claim 24. Ellenson teaches said system, wherein said reception unit is capable of further receiving a comment made by the client, and if said reception unit receives the comment, said control unit decides to request the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal [0044], [0071].

Claim 25. The sales support system according to claim 22,

wherein said estimated price database stores different specification information of a vehicle corresponding estimated prices, and corresponding first calculator identification information of a person who has calculated each estimated price [0027],

said reception unit further receives second calculator identification information of a person to calculate a second estimated price from said client terminal [0040],

said control unit decides whether or not said first calculator identification information and said second calculator identification information are different [0071],
and

if said control unit decides that the first calculator identification information and the second calculator identification information are different, said second transmission unit sends the estimated price to said dealer terminal and requests approval on transmitting the estimated price to said client terminal [0071].

Claim 26. Ellenson teaches a method for facilitating the real-time pricing, sale and appraisal of vehicles comprising:

receiving specification information for a vehicle and an estimation request from said client terminal [0027];

deciding whether to send an estimated price stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal or to request a dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal [0071];

a first transmitting which includes reading the estimated price from said estimated price database based upon the specification information of the vehicle and sending the estimated price to said client terminal if it is decided to send the estimated price to the client terminal [0071]; and

a second transmitting which includes sending the specification information of the vehicle to said dealer terminal, receiving the dealer estimated price from said dealer terminal, and sending the dealer estimated price to said client terminal if it is decided to send the dealer estimated price to the client terminal [0071].

Claim 27. Ellenson teaches said method, wherein,

in the receiving client information specifying a client is received from said client terminal, the deciding is performed according to the client information [0071], and

in the second transmitting, the client information and the specification information are sent to said dealer terminal [0071].

Claim 28. Ellenson teaches said method, wherein in the receiving, a comment made by the client can be further received from said client terminal, and the deciding, if the comment has been received in the receiving, the dealer estimated price is requested from said dealer terminal [0071].

Claim 29. Ellenson teaches said method, wherein said estimated price database stores different specification information of a vehicle for a plurality of vehicles,

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corresponding estimated prices and first calculator identification information of a person who has calculated each estimated price [0027],

in said receiving, second calculator identification information of a person to calculate a second price is further received from said client terminal [0040],

in said deciding, it is decided whether or not said first calculator identification information and said second calculator identification information are different [0071], and

in said second transmitting if the first calculator identification information and the second calculator identification information have been determined to be different, the estimated price is sent to said dealer terminal and approval on transmitting the estimated price to said client terminal is requested [0071].

Claims 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellenson in view of Reece (US 2003/0061179).

Claim 4. Ellenson teaches all the limitations of claim 4 except that said control unit uses the specification information received by said reception unit to read the market price from said price information database and, when a difference between the estimated price and the market price is within a predetermined range, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the estimated price retrieved from said estimated price database to said client terminal.

Reece teaches said system, including threshold pricing process means for comparing the threshold price with the network operator's price in market environment, wherein if the network operator's price is less than or equal to the threshold price, the threshold pricing process will allow the communication to continue or start the set-up process; if the network operator's price exceeds the threshold price, the process will generate several options for the user [0007].

Ellenson and Reece do not specifically teach that if a difference between the read estimated price to be automatically transmitted and the market price is within a predetermined range, controlling said first transmission unit to send the estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal.

However, there is no indication in the specification that said arrangement provides advantages over teaching of the prior art. Therefore, It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Ellenson and Reece to include that if a difference between the read estimated price to be automatically transmitted and the market price is within a predetermined range, controlling said first transmission unit to send the estimated price to be automatically transmitted stored in said estimated price database to said client terminal, because it would advantageously allow to maximize profits in dynamic pricing environment.

Claim 5. Ellenson teaches all the limitations of claim 5 except that said reception unit further receives a desired price at which the client desires to purchase the vehicle

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from said client terminal, and when the estimated price is higher than the desired price, if a difference between the estimated price and the desired price is within a predetermined range, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the read estimated price to said client terminal.

Reece teaches said system, including threshold pricing process means for comparing the threshold price with the network operator's price in market environment, wherein if the network operator's price is less than or equal to the threshold price, the threshold pricing process will allow the communication to continue or start the set-up process; if the network operator's price exceeds the threshold price, the process will generate several options for the user [0007].

Ellenson and Reece do not specifically teach that a difference between the estimated price to be automatically transmitted and the desired price is within a predetermined range, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the read estimated price to said client terminal.

However, there is no indication in the specification that said arrangement provides advantages over teaching of the prior art. Therefore, It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Ellenson and Reece to include that a difference between the estimated price to be automatically transmitted and the desired price is within a predetermined range, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the read estimated price to said client terminal, because it would advantageously allow to maximize profits in dynamic pricing environment.

Claim 6. Ellenson teaches all the limitations of claim 6 except said reception unit further receives a desired price at which the client desires to purchase the vehicle from said client terminal, and when the estimated price is higher than the desired price, if a difference between the estimated price and the desired price is within a predetermined range, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the desired price to said client terminal.

Reece teaches said system, including threshold pricing process means for comparing the threshold price with the network operator's price in market environment, wherein if the network operator's price is less than or equal to the threshold price, the threshold pricing process will allow the communication to continue or start the set-up process; if the network operator's price exceeds the threshold price, the process will generate several options for the user [0007].

Ellenson and Reece do not specifically teach that if a difference between the estimated price to be automatically transmitted and the desired price is within a predetermined range, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the received desired price to said client terminal as an estimated price.

However, there is no indication in the specification that said arrangement provides advantages over teaching of the prior art. Therefore, It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Ellenson and Reece to include that if a difference between the estimated price to be automatically transmitted and the desired price is within a predetermined range, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the received desired price to said

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client terminal as an estimated price, because it would advantageously allow to maximize profits in dynamic pricing environment.

Claim 7. Ellenson teaches all the limitations of claim 7 except said reception unit further receives a desired price at which the client desires to purchase the vehicle from said client terminal, and when the desired price is higher than the estimated price, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the received desired price to said client terminal.

Reece teaches said system, including threshold pricing process means for comparing the threshold price with the network operator's price in market environment, wherein if the network operator's price is less than or equal to the threshold price, the threshold pricing process will allow the communication to continue or start the set-up process; if the network operator's price exceeds the threshold price, the process will generate several options for the user [0007].

Ellenson and Reece do not specifically teach that if the desired price received by said reception unit is higher than the estimated price to be automatically transmitted read from said estimated price database, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the received desired price to said client terminal as an estimated price

However, there is no indication in the specification that said arrangement provides advantages over teaching of the prior art. Therefore, It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to

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modify Ellenson and Reece to include that if the desired price received by said reception unit is higher than the estimated price to be automatically transmitted read from said estimated price database, said control unit controls said first transmission unit to send the received desired price to said client terminal as an estimated price, because it would advantageously allow to maximize profits in dynamic pricing environment.

Claims 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellenson in view of Pous et al. (hereinafter Pous) (US 2003/0135429).

Claim 10. Ellenson teaches all the limitations of claim 10 except that said estimated price database stores an estimated price for specifications of a part of the vehicle, and if the estimated price corresponding to the specification information received by said reception unit is not stored in said estimated price database, said reading unit reads the estimated price corresponding to a specification stored in said estimated price database that is close to the specification information.

Pous teaches a custom engineered product system wherein the specification may be compared to those of the available products to determine closest matches which may then be suggested to the customer [0027], [0028].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Ellenson to include that said estimated price database stores an estimated price to be automatically transmitted for specifications of a part of the vehicle, and in the case in which an estimated price to be automatically transmitted

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of the specification information received by said reception unit is not stored in said estimated price database, said reading unit reads an estimated price to be automatically transmitted of specifications close to the specification information, as disclosed in Pous, because it would allow to rapidly respond to a client's or market's need for specialty products or services (Pous, [0007]).

Conclusion

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed on 05/26/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that the prior art does not teach the sales support server which is linked to a database and two terminals (a dealer terminal and a client terminal).

As per "*client terminal*" feature, it is noted that Ellenson explicitly teaches said feature. Specifically, Fig. 7A in Ellenson reference illustrates "a screen where a manufacturer, model and model year for the used vehicle is *identified by the user* (client)", thereby indicating the use of terminal by the client [0088].

As per "database" feature, it is noted that Ellenson explicitly teaches said feature. Specifically, Ellenson teaches a *database* for storing information including vehicle prices, vehicle data [0040]

As per "*dealer terminal*" feature, it is noted that Ellenson teaches said feature. Specifically, Ellenson teaches "receiving the price request by the dealer, replying to the

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pricing system and providing a value, thereby indicating the use of a terminal by a dealer [0071].

In response to Applicants' argument that the prior art does not teach the reception unit receiving specification information and estimation request from the client terminal, it is noted that Ellenson does, in fact, teach said feature. Specifically, Ellenson teaches "a user interface receiving details associated with a specific seller-identified vehicle" (seller is a client in Ellenson reference) [0028], thereby indicating a reception unit.

In response to Applicants' argument that the prior art does not specify what supplies the input data, it is noted that Figs. & A-G in Ellenson reference illustrates a screen where a manufacturer, model and model year of the vehicle is identified by the seller (client) [0088].

Applicants argue that while their invention teaches that the client (seller) request price information for a vehicle, Ellenson teaches that the client (seller) provides the price for the vehicle.

In response to their argument, it is noted that Applicants confuse a buyer with a seller. Specifically, in Ellenson reference, the entity requesting a price information for the vehicle is a *seller*, and the entity providing a price information is a *buyer*.

Accordingly, Ellenson discloses receiving specification information of a vehicle and an estimation request from said client terminal, and providing an estimated price to said client terminal.

In response to Applicants' argument that the prior art does not teach the reading unit reading an estimated price from the estimated price database based upon the specification information, it is noted that Ellenson does, in fact, teach said unit. Specifically, Ellenson teaches a price database and a pricing module programmed to calculate a guaranteed price for a vehicle from the data stored in system database [0040], (thereby indicating accessing database or reading from the database functionality)

In response to Applicants' argument that the prior art does not teach first transmission means and second transmission means, it is noted that said feature would be obvious in view of well known fact that hardware are frequently upgraded due to development in technology. Implementing the inventive functionality via a plurality of hardware modules would advantageously simplify the upgrading procedures which (upgrading procedures) are necessary to conduct frequently (see, for example, US 6,639,910; col. 12, lines 3-5).

In response to Applicant's argument that Reese does not teach all the elements of the system of claim 1, it is noted that the Reece reference was applied for "using the specification information to read a related market price..." feature.

In response to Applicant's argument that Pous does not teach all the elements of the system as disclosed in claim 1, it is noted that the Pous reference was applied for "reading the estimated price for the specification information stored in the database when the requested specification is not available" feature.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

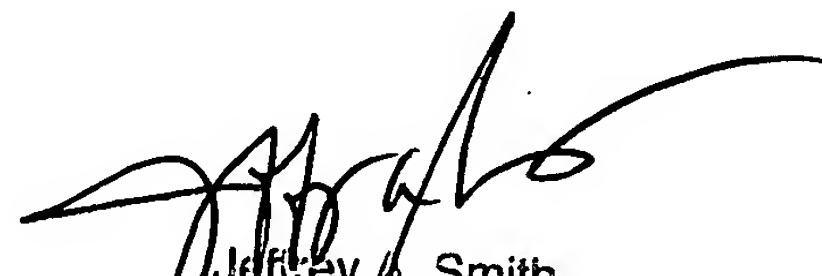
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mila Airapetian whose telephone number is (571) 272-3202. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:30 am - 6:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on (571) 272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Jeffrey A. Smith
Primary Examiner